

The Electric Mercury

U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, March 2003

**For more on these and other important stories, see March 2003 printed issue of The Mercury.
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.**

Trauma training: soldiers see real wounds at Miami hospital

Soldiers from 948th Forward Surgical Team hurry forward as a helicopter lands, shouting questions to the helicopter medics as they unload a patient. The Southfield, Mich., Reserve unit is in its two-week annual training at the Army Trauma Training Center (ATTC), at Ryder Trauma Center, the civilian level-one trauma center for Miami-Dade County, Fla. Soldiers work with ATTC and Ryder staff on real patients, making life-or-death decisions, as part of a program designed to give military medical staff hard-to-get trauma experience. (With multiple photos)

Outpatient data records provide essence of security

Defense personnel are on the watch for bioterrorism, scanning computer databases featuring outpatient treatment information from more than 300 military hospitals and clinics worldwide. The Electronic Surveillance System for Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics, or ESSENCE, helps to detect both natural disease outbreaks and potential bioterrorism attacks. ESSENCE started in 2000 as a pilot program to monitor the health of service members, family members and military retirees in metropolitan Washington. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks, it was expanded to include information from 313 Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard medical facilities. ESSENCE's worldwide reach is important, because infectious diseases have no borders and an attack on one country could well be an attack on the globe.

System gives faster access to records

A computerized system will eventually provide military physicians with fast, around-the-clock access to patient records anywhere in the world. The Department of Defense has "green-lighted" the Composite Health Care System II, a digitized, networked patient-record system, for deployment. The system is slated to debut at up to seven military hospitals within the next year. Authorities will gather lessons learned and then go worldwide over the next three-year period. Global implementation of CHCS II could take up to five years.

AMEDD prepares for mission in Southwest Asia

The AMEDD can be proud of its advances since the Gulf War, writes Army Surgeon General and MEDCOM Commander LTG James B. Peake. The Medical Reengineering Initiative is proving itself, as modular medical units can be tailored to area and mission. New 91W medics are ready to hit the ground running and U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, which did not exist 12 years ago, is doing tests that let commanders deal with the environment proactively. Peake praises pre-deployment screenings and Medical Research and Materiel Command's role in providing new drugs.

Other important stories in this month's edition of the *Mercury* include:

- Defense health chief Dr. William Winkenwerder, Jr., tells TRICARE Conference that 2002 saw progress in TRICARE coverage/administration and in protecting GIs against bioweapons.
- Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, trains medical leaders from all services to coordinate efforts and share resources in joint-operations course.
- Five-year trial at Walter Reed Army Medical Center investigates use of electrical-impedance scanning (EIS) to detect early stages of breast cancer in women under 45.
- Chemical-protection garments can leak at ankles, wrists, neck, and waist if put on incorrectly, so the Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense invents a paste to seal these areas.
- Walter Reed Army Institute of Research discovers way to detect immune-system changes soon after exposure to a pathogen, permitting early identification of treatments needed.
- Army Reserve's 109th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services) cares for military and civilian working dogs; controls animal population; and inspects food in Afghanistan.
- Army Chapter, American College of Physicians, honors retired and active physicians, teams.
- CPT Kristen Vondruska, Tripler Army Medical Center; CPT Jean Hollinrake, Iowa ARNG; and CPT Phillip Cummings, 3274th U.S. Army Hospital (USAR), win Nurse Corps awards.
- Medical Specialist Corps honors CPT Ted Chapman, Institute of Surgical Research; CPT Holly Roberts, Walter Reed Army Medical Center; CPT Elizabeth North, Center and School.
- CPT Wilson Ariza, 1st Medical Brigade, Fort Hood, Texas, is AMEDD Information Management Officer of the Year; his team is Team of the Year; IM Civilian of the Year is Donald Rawlinson, Army School of Aviation Medicine, Fort Rucker, Ala.; IM Soldier of the Year is SGT Jason McCoy, Army Medical Information Systems and Services Agency, San Antonio.
- Photos: Laser technicians Denise Sedig and Joann Hansley and physician MAJ Richard Stutzman prepare CPT Steven Jones for LASIK surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center; soldiers demonstrate how medical equipment is attached to litter using platform invented by SSG Eric Smeed, Institute of Surgical Research; Eisenhower Army Medical Center's new logo; dentist demonstrates new gear that cuts weight and power needs of field dental units; CPT Cory Campora, 791st Preventive Medicine Detachment, demonstrates pesticide sprayer in Afghanistan; SPC Angele Dinges assists dentist LTC Carl Temple at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.
- Attitude of each AMEDD individual is key to customer service, writes MEDCOM customer-service consultant Mike Meines in the third article of his series.
- Commentary: "Do you speak doughnut?," by SGT Amy Nyland, suggests alternatives to giving in when food "talks" to you; "Civil War leader set example for integrity," by Jerry Harben, shows how Union Surgeon General Dr. William Hammond exemplified Army Values.
- Sensible weight-control strategies are focus of National Nutrition Month article by U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine expert.